

'Homeless' milk possible

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disastrous had they not been withdrawn due to outside pressures."

Dutton also noted that only about half of the dairymen in the Order 2 market belong to milk cooperatives. "If it drops much below that, we could lose the Order," he warned. Eastern wants to see it kept.

Speaking briefly about Eastern itself, Dutton said

the cooperative is "financially viable, has a stable membership of over 8,000 in five marketing orders, and will show black figures at the end of the year." Membership dues are not going to be raised. Handling 3½-billion pounds of milk annually, the dairy co-op has a payroll to members which exceeds \$240-million per year.

With milk production

climbing at a rate of three to five percent per month as compared to figures of a year ago, Dutton foresees some "homeless" milk for dairymen who might not belong to cooperatives. He explained that one of the best ways a farmer has to protect his investments is by joining a cooperative which can guarantee a market and a milk check.

Should independent

producers find themselves in a poor market situation, Dutton says a milk handler is required by law to notify the farmer in advance that he is about to lose his market. Eastern, Dutton says, is willing to handle "the milk from those producers if they (the independent shippers) notify Eastern seven to 10 days in advance that this is what they want to do. However, there would be a charge of \$1.75 per hundredweight for this service for seven days, after which other arrangements may be made.

The increased production seen now is due to the more favorable milk price to feed ratio, higher milk prices, and fact that off-the-farm jobs are scarce, Dutton said. It is not expected to disturb Eastern's business due to their marketing milk in five federal Orders throughout the Northeast. "Most all of our milk will be sold without surplus," the public relations director remarked.

"Supply and demand sets the prices - we must produce milk to fit the needs of the market," Eastern's representative exclaimed. The cost of production, although still climbing, is not going to be rising as much as it did last year. Milk prices, now well above levels of a year ago, are expected to remain there at least through August. The last four months of the year may see prices drop slightly below those encountered during late 1975. Eastern originally projected prices of \$9.73, \$9.89, \$9.92, and \$9.71 for the consecutive months of September, October, November, and December but a significant drop in M-W prices indicates that approximately 25 cents should be subtracted from each of the above figures. The average price by the end of 1976 is going to be around \$9.26 if present projections hold true, compared to \$8.56 last year.

Cattle export meeting scheduled

In recent weeks Canadian government cattle buyers have been on the Lancaster Market interested in buying finished cattle to ship into Canada. President of the Lancaster Stockyards Inc., William G. McCoy, is interested in getting any local feeders qualified to ship into Canada in order to receive top prices for their cattle.

The Canadian government prohibits the use of diethylstilbestrol (DES) hormone in the feeding of their cattle; animals that have been fed or implanted with DES are banned from entry into Canada. Feeders who are interested in exporting their cattle will be required to take a seminar

given by the Extension Service explaining the ban on the hormone; papers will need to be signed verifying this information. Also, papers will need to be signed by the local veterinarian verifying the cattle have not received DES.

A public meeting is scheduled for Wednesday evening, March 31, at 7:30 p.m. in the Auction Barn at the Lancaster Stockyards for interested feeders. The necessary papers will be on hand for complying with the Canadian regulation. Mr. William G. McCoy, President of the Stockyards, and M. M. Smith, County Extension Agent, will present the procedure and needed information.

The recent increase in milk support prices is not going to increase prices paid to farmers, Dutton said. But they will set a floor when prices drop. Eastern, he noted, had been pushing for the 85 percent parity level which was approved by both Houses of Congress, then vetoed by President Ford, and left go at that by Congress when it came up for a veto. Dutton reflects on the proceedings as having been nothing more than a "political football." The cooperative had also requested quarterly adjustments of parity, which was passed. He noted that attempts by cooperatives last year is what was responsible for having milk prices raised last October. That resulted in milk prices being relatively good for the latter part of 1975 while they were "depressed" during the first nine months of that year.

Returning to the question of the Federal Order 2

amendments proposed by some groups, Dutton emphatically stated that Eastern is opposed to the plan on all counts. One point in particular refers to the FOB farm price, which Eastern supports and wishes could be implemented elsewhere as well. That limits the hauling charges to the producer to 10 cents per hundredweight, and creates differences in paying prices. That's especially true in the metropolitan New York and northern New Jersey areas where the situation is compounded by union labor contracts.

Farmer cooperatives, under pressure from various groups, including the Justice Department, must be strong, Dutton said in his concluding remarks. He emphasized the need for co-op membership in Order 2 to stay above the 50 percent mark lest the entire Order be in jeopardy. "We need cooperatives for protection, price, and stable marketing," he said.

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